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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Letter dated 16 February 2001 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you in follow-up of my recent letter, dated 1 February 2001 (A/55/760-S/2001/98), regarding the reported use by the Israeli occupying forces of depleted uranium against Palestinian targets. I have been instructed to inform you that the Israeli occupying forces have used, at least on one occasion, an unknown type of gas against Palestinian civilians. This grave and serious matter is yet another part of the brutal Israeli military campaign being carried against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, in recent months.

In this regard, according to a report by the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Health, the Israeli army fired, on 12 February 2001, an unknown type of gas at civilians in Khan Yunis, which resulted in the admission of 40 Palestinians to local hospitals. The hospitals reported various odd symptoms of neurological fits and convulsions, which those patients who had been exposed to the gas were overcome by. Some of the victims were discharged, while others continue to be under close medical care.

The Palestinian Authority unfortunately lacks the expertise and facilities necessary for identifying the type of gas being used, as well as the appropriate antidote. Accordingly, we are seeking the assistance of the available expertise in the United Nations system in examining and defining the type or types of gas being used in these incidents. In this regard, your personal attention and guidance would be highly appreciated.

01-25364 (E) 160201

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 40, 41 and 85, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nasser **Al-Kidwa**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations